



European Association for the Study of Obesity

**A Statement on Obesity for the Sixty-fourth session of the WHO Regional Committee for Europe,  
15-18 September 2014, Denmark**

**Agenda Item: 5 (d) European food and nutrition action plan 2015–2020 (Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> September)**

It is widely acknowledged that obesity is the gateway to many other disease areas, including most NCDs. If appropriately managed and prevented, it will block a major supply route to ill health. Obesity should therefore be viewed as one of the main targets for current efforts to combat the increasing NCDs epidemic. As a harbinger of a multitude of disabling and fatal diseases, obesity represents one of the most relevant public health challenges of the 21st century, threatening to reverse many of the health gains achieved so far. Obesity is a serious, chronic disease that will only worsen without thoughtful and evidence-based interventions, and as the obesity epidemic worsens, so too will the prevalence of NCDs.

In order to curb this situation, obesity should be a top priority, with increased commitment for concerted, coordinated and specific actions. A comprehensive and pro-active strategy to deal with the challenges posed by the obesity epidemic in a sustainable way is urgently needed. Encouraging the development and implementation of programmes for prevention, early diagnosis and treatment is mandatory. It is clearly imperative that obesity, as a disease and as a gateway to NCDs, is targeted as an area for immediate action and priority for research, innovation and action.

Weight management will therefore play a major role in reducing morbidity and mortality of populations in Europe and world-wide. EASO therefore supports the WHO 'European Food and Nutrition Action Plan 2015–2020', which we believe will play a significant role in facilitating lifestyle change in European populations, through its commitment to improve the overall quality of the European population's diet and nutritional status.

EASO will continue to work towards its mission of facilitating and engaging in actions that reduce the burden of unhealthy excess weight in Europe through prevention and management, but a wider effort is needed. EASO therefore calls on the Ministries of Health of the Member States of the WHO Region of Europe to adopt and implement the Action Plan as part of an effort to prioritise the prevention and management of obesity.

The Executive Committee of EASO on behalf of the General Council of EASO